

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-05 H-02 PA-02

PRS-01 SS-15 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SSO-00 PM-04 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 INRE-00 /085 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:EOJONES

APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

EUR/P - MR. JERABEK

IO/P - MR. BLACHLY

SSM - MR. MC ANDREW

NEA/ARP - MR. DICKMAN

AF/P - MR. POPE

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
USMISSION SINAI
CINCEUR

UNCLAS STATE 188679

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JULY 29

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR JULY 29,
1976:

(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

MR. FUNSETH. I HAVE ONE ANNOUNCEMENT. WE HAVE IN THE
OFFICE A STATEMENT BY PHILIP HABIB, UNDER SECRETARY FOR
POLITICAL AFFAIRS, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON REFUGEES
AND ESCAPEES OF THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE. MR. HABIB
APPEARED AT 9:30 THIS MORNING AND TESTIFIED ON THE SUBJECT
OF THE HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE TRAGEDY IN
LEBANON.

Q. CONCERNING CONTACTS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE PLO, YOU
HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT HOW MANY SUBJECTS WITH THEM?

A. WE HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT THE SECURITY OF OUR PEOPLE
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IN WEST BEIRUT.

Q. AND --?

A. PERIOD.

Q. AT ONE TIME WITH EVACUATION?

A. THAT WOULD INCLUDE SECURITY --

Q. SO THAT THE ONLY --

A. I WOULD PUT THAT UNDER THE RUBRIC OF SECURITY.

Q. THE ONLY ISSUE BEING DISCUSSED IS SECURITY?

A. SECURITY, RIGHT.

Q. THE ONLY ONE?

A. RIGHT.

Q. THERE WAS A QUESTION AND AN ANSWER SUBMITTED JULY 28TH:
"QUESTION: DID THE BEIRUT EMBASSY ALSO DISCUSS WITH THE
PLO THE SECURITY OF NON-OFFICIAL AMERICANS?" "ANSWER:
ONLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE EVACUATION, HAVE WE CONTACTED
THE PALESTINIANS ABOUT THE SECURITY OF NON-OFFICIAL
AMERICANS."

DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT NOW EQUATE THE PLO WITH THE
PALESTINIANS?

A. I THINK OUR CONTACTS CONCERNING SECURITY AND CONCERNING
THE EVACUATION WERE WITH THE PLO.

Q. I UNDERSTAND THAT, BUT THE QUESTION CONCERNED THE PLO
AND THE ANSWER WAS PALESTINIANS.

A. I THINK THEY WERE USING THAT WORD IN THE CONTEXT OF
THE PLO. I WOULD NOT ATTACH THAT CORRELATION TO WHAT YOU
HAVE ASKED ME.
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Q. YOU WOULDN'T?

A. NO.

Q. THE STATE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT REGARD THE PLO AS
PALESTINIANS -- MEANING REPRESENTING PALESTINIANS?

A. THE PLO IS THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION.

Q. YES, I KNOW WHAT IT STANDS FOR.

A. THAT IS WHAT IT REPRESENTS TO US -- NO MORE, NO LESS.

Q. SO YOU COULD HAVE JUST AS WELL ANSWERED THIS AND EVEN
BEEN MORE ACCURATE TO SAY "CONTACTED WITH THE PLO."

A. THAT IS THE WAY IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN WORDED.

Q. AND THERE IS NO OFFICIAL EQUATION HERE BETWEEN THE
PLO AND THE PALESTINIANS?

A. NO.

Q. ONE OTHER ONE: GOING BACK TO THE 27TH, WHEN YOU TALKED SOMEWHAT BELATEDLY ABOUT THESE CONTACTS WITH THE PLO CONCERNING SECURITY, THE LAST SENTENCE IS: "WE INFORMED THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT OF OUR FIRST CONTACT SHORTLY AFTER IT TOOK PLACE. IT TOOK PLACE AT THE END OF JUNE."

A. YES.

Q. CAN ONE ASSUME THE CONTACT WITH THE ISRAELIS TOOK PLACE AT THE END OF JUNE?

A. NO.

Q. WHEN DID IT TAKE PLACE?

A. IT TOOK PLACE SOMETIME SHORTLY AFTER THE END OF JUNE.
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Q. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN IN ENGLISH?

A. IT MEANS JUST WHAT I SAID.

Q. WELL, IT'S AN UNCLEAR STATEMENT.

A. IT IS IMPRECISE. I THINK IT IS CLEAR, BUT IT IS IMPRECISE. WE DID NOT PROVIDE THE EXACT DATE OF THIS EXCHANGE.

Q. WELL THEN, IF IT TOOK PLACE TWO WEEKS AFTER -- FOR EXAMPLE, THE MIDDLE OF JULY -- WOULD YOU SAY THAT CORRESPONDS WITH NORMAL ENGLISH USAGE "SHORTLY AFTER"?

A. I AM SAYING THAT WE INFORMED THE ISRAELIS SHORTLY AFTER THAT DATE. I STAND BY THE ANSWER AS POSTED.

Q. AND IF, IN FACT, YOU CONTACTED THE ISRAELIS IN THE MIDDLE OF JULY, WOULD YOU STILL STICK WITH "SHORTLY AFTER"?

A. I AM REASONABLY CONFIDENT OF THE INFORMATION AS IT WAS PROVIDED TO ME, SO I AM GOING TO STAND WITH IT.

Q. WHY CAN'T YOU BE PRECISE ABOUT THIS, SO WE DON'T HAVE TO GO THROUGH ANOTHER ONE OF THESE EXERCISES?

A. I DO NOT THINK WE HAVE TO PROVIDE A LOG -- HOUR, DATE AND TIME -- MARVIN, WHEN WE HAVE CONTACTS WITH THE ISRAELI EMBASSY.

Q. NO, YOU REALLY DON'T; BUT IT COMES WITHIN A CONTEXT OF CONSIDERABLE AMBIGUITY IN WHAT YOUR PODIUM HAS PROVIDED US CONCERNING CONTACTS. AND THE ONLY REASON I'M TRYING TO GET A PRECISE ANSWER IS THAT WHEN WE LEAVE YOU TO BE IMPRECISE, YOU ALSO MISLEAD.

A. I REJECT THAT.

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Q. YOU DO?

A. YES, I DO -- CATEGORICALLY AND EMPHATICALLY.

Q. REALLY?

A. YES.

Q. WELL, COULD YOU COME FORTH WITH AN ANSWER ON "SHORTLY AFTER"?

A. I THINK "SHORTLY AFTER" MEANS A SHORT TIME AFTER.

Q. DOES IT MEAN TWO WEEKS AFTER?

A. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT IT MEANS.

Q. WELL, I THOUGHT YOU DO KNOW WHEN THE CONTACT TOOK PLACE.

A. I AM NOT GOING TO CONFIRM, NOR AM I GOING TO PROVIDE A LOGBOOK FOR YOU OF OUR DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGE WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENT. THE QUESTION WAS: HAD WE INFORMED THE ISRAELIS?

Q. YOU DO THAT QUITE OFTEN.

A. THE QUESTION WAS: HAD WE INFORMED THE ISRAELIS.

Q. THE QUESTION WAS WHEN.

A. THE QUESTION WAS HAD WE INFORMED THE ISRAELIS, AND I SAID WE INFORMED THE ISRAELIS. WE SAID SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

Q. AT THE END OF JUNE WAS THE STATE DEPARTMENT PLANNING THE EVACUATION FROM BEIRUT THAT HAS JUST OCCURRED?

A. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER A SECOND EVACUATION WAS THEN BEING CONTEMPLATED.

Q. WELL, HOW COULD YOU HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING WITH THE PLO
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ONLY THE ISSUE OF EVACUATION IF AN EVACUATION WASN'T EVEN BEING PLANNED AT THE TIME?

A. WE SAID, I THINK -- WHY DON'T YOU READ THE ITEM WE POSTED, SO THAT WE HAVE IT IN THE RECORD? I DO NOT HAVE IT BEFORE ME.

Q. THE SECURITY OF EMBASSY PERSONNEL -- I UNDERSTOOD; MAYBE I'M WRONG -- SECURITY IN TERMS OF AN EVACUATION.

A. NO, IT WAS NOT IN TERMS OF AN EVACUATION.

Q. WELL, THEN, IS IT IN TERMS OF MAINTAINING THE EMBASSY?

A. IT IS IN TERMS OF THE SECURITY OF OUR PERSONNEL IN THEIR MOVEMENTS IN WEST BEIRUT, AND THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT THE POSTED ANSWER SAID.

Q. NO, I UNDERSTAND. I'M JUST TRYING TO AMPLIFY THAT YOUR OFFICIAL RESPONSE --

A. AND THEN I THINK THE ANSWER SAID -- I DO NOT HAVE IT IN FRONT OF ME -- THAT WE ALSO HAD CONTACT WITH THEM IN WORKING OUT THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE EVACUATION.

Q. WHAT I'; DRIVING AT IS HOW DEPENDENT IS THE EXISTENCE OF THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY IN BEIRUT ON THE GOOD GRACES OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION?

A. IT IS NOT DEPENDENT ON THE PLO. ITS EXISTENCE IS NOT DEPENDENT ON THE PLO.

Q. IS THE COMINGS AND GOINGS OF EMBASSY PERSONNEL -- TO BUY FOOD, TO THEIR HOMES, TO THE GAS STATION -- IS THAT DEPENDENT ON THE PLO? IS THAT WHAT YOU LIVE BY IN LEBANON?

A. NO. TO THE EXTENT THAT THE PLO OR ANY OTHER FACTION IN ANY PART OF BEIRUT OR LEBANON IS CONTROLLING THE SECURITY -- FOR PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THOSE RESPECTIVE AREAS -- OBVIOUSLY SECURITY IS A FACTOR OF THEIR LIFE --
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Q. ALL RIGHT.

A. -- AND IT HAS BEEN.

Q. AND IF IT'S SUCH A STRONG FACTOR, WHY AREN'T YOU IN TOUCH WITH THE PLO OVER THE WELL-BEING OF OTHER AMERICANS

IN LEBANON? SURELY, YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR WELL-BEING -- THE ONES THAT REMAIN, THE 700 OR 800 THAT ARE STAYING THERE.

A. I DO NOT THINK WE HAVE THE CAPACITY OR THE CAPABILITY TO DISCUSS WITH THE PLO MORE THAN THE MOVEMENTS OF A FEW PEOPLE. I DO NOT THINK WE ARE IN A POSITION TO DISCUSS WITH THE PLO, OR ANY OTHER GROUP, THE MOVEMENTS OF A THOUSAND PEOPLE. THERE IS JUST NO WAY THAT WE CAN HAVE THAT KIND OF INFORMATION. BUT IT IS OUR CONCERN FOR THE GENERAL DETERIORATING SECURITY SITUATION IN LEBANON THAT PROMPTED US TO ORGANIZE THIS MOST RECENT EVACUATION AND TO URGE ALL AMERICANS TO LEAVE, AND IT IS WHY WE REDUCED OUR EMBASSY DOWN TO 15 PEOPLE.

Q. AND THE OTHER QUESTION THAT I LEFT WITH YOU YESTERDAY -- CAN YOU TELL US TODAY WHY THE STATE DEPARTMENT DIDN'T COME FORWARD AT THE TIME OF THE CONTACT AND TELL US -- AND BY "US" I JUST MEAN THE PUBLIC -- ABOUT THE CONTACT, SINCE WE WERE ASKING ABOUT IT ALMOST DAILY AND IT WAS BEING DENIED ALMOST DAILY AT THAT VERY TIME?

A. NO. IN FACT, THE RECORD SHOWS THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN ASKED DAILY, BARRY.

Q. NO. I THINK THE RECORD WILL SHOW THAT WE HAVE ASKED.

A. THE RECORD SHOWS NOT A DAILY ACCOUNTING.

Q. NO, NOT DAILY, BUT CERTAINLY WITHIN THAT --

A. THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION IS: WHY D-DN'T THE STATE DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEER AND MAKE A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT AT THE TIME THAT THE EMBASSY SECURITY OFFICER WAS AUTHORIZED UNCLASSIFIED

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TO HAVE A CONTACT WITH THE PLO CONCERNING --

Q. YES.

A. -- THE SECURITY OF OUR PEOPLE IN WEST BEIRUT --

Q. YES.

A. -- AND MY ONLY ANSWER CAN BE THAT IT IS A QUESTION OF JUDGMENT WHEN SOMETHING IS VOLUNTEERED. IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF WITHHOLDING INFORMATION.

Q. NO.

A. I THINK IT HAS TO DO WITH THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CONTACT, WHICH CONCERNS SECURITY OF PEOPLE.

Q. NO, NO. YOU KNOW -- I'M TRYING TO GET INTO THE JUDGMENT.

A. YES.

Q. WHAT WAS THE JUDGMENT MADE -- THAT IT'S BETTER NOT TO TELL THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH THE PLO -- IS THAT THE POINT --

A. WELL --

Q. -- OR SECURITY IS SOMETHING YOU DON'T WANT TO DISCUSS. I DON'T KNOW.

A. IN THE FIRST PLACE, IT WAS CONFIRMED, ACKNOWLEDGED AND REPORTED THAT WE WERE HAVING CONTACTS WITH THE PLO THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES ON THE QUESTION OF SECURITY, SO THAT IT WAS NOT NEW THAT --

Q. THE QUESTION OF EVACUATION, BOB --

A. EVACUATION.

Q. -- IT WAS THE BRITISH IN JUNE ON THE SEABORNE EVACUATION. UNCLASSIFIED

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ATION.

A. RIGHT.

Q. YOU'RE BROADENING THE CONTEXT NOW.

A. THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES. BUT I WAS NOT PART OF THAT JUDGMENT, SO I AM ONLY SPECULATING ON THE REASONING THAT WENT INTO IT. BUT I DO NOT THINK THAT IT IS A QUESTION OF SHOULD WE WITHHOLD THIS FROM THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. I THINK IT DEALS WITH THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ISSUE WHICH WAS BEING CONSIDERED.

Q. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT AGREE WITH THE COMMON CONSENSUS THAT THE PLO IS SUFFERING A DECLINE AS A RESULT OF THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR?

A. I WAS ASKED THAT THE OTHER DAY. I JUST AM NOT IN A POSITION TO MAKE THAT KIND OF AN ASSESSMENT. I JUST DO NOT KNOW.

Q. WELL, WHETHER OR NOT THEY'RE SUFFERING A DECLINE, DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GIVING THEM A HAND BY HAVING CONTACT WITH THEM?

A. NO.

Q. I DON'T MEAN THAT'S YOUR INTENTION. DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE GIVING THEM A HAND?

A. NO. I DO NOT SEE WHY THAT NECESSARILY FOLLOWS. THEY HAPPEN TO BE THE PRINCIPAL ELEMENT AS FAR AS SECURITY IS CONCERNED IN WEST BEIRUT; AND IN THE INTEREST OF PROTECTING THE LIVES OF OUR PEOPLE WHO ARE STILL AT THAT EMBASSY AND WHO WERE AT THE EMBASSY FOLLOWING THE ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR SEELYE, IT WAS THOUGHT IMPORTANT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THEM.

Q. IF THE EMBASSY WERE RINGED BY TERRORISTS, WOULDN'T YOU PRODUCE YOUR OLD STATEMENT ABOUT "WE CAN'T DEAL WITH TERRORISTS"? YOU WOULD DRAW THE LINE THERE, WOULDN'T YOU?

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A. THE PEOPLE WHO ARE GUARDING THE EMBASSY HAPPEN TO BE ELEMENTS OF THE LEBANESE ARAB ARMY -- AS I HAVE INDICATED -- AND WE HAVE INDICATED THAT ALTHOUGH WE HAVE REDUCED OUR EMBASSY DOWN TO A VERY SMALL STAFF OF 15, WE STILL THINK IT IS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES TO CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THAT EMBASSY, ALTHOUGH AT A VERY LOW LEVEL.

Q. THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT TODAY EXPRESSED ITS REGRET AT THOSE CONTACTS WITH THE PLO. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THAT?

A. NO.

Q. I KNOW YOU SAID YOU WERE NOT PART OF THE JUDGMENT MADE, BUT WAS THE JUDGMENT NOT TO VOLUNTEER THE INFORMATION BASED ON THE FEAR OF A REACTION FROM ISRAEL OR FROM PRO-ISRAELI PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY AND THE CONGRESS THAT THE UNITED STATES MIGHT IN SOME WAY BE RECOGNIZING THE PLO -- OR WAS IT BASED PURELY ON SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS?

A. I AM NOT ABLE TO COMMENT ON WHAT WENT INTO THEIR JUDGMENT. I ASSUME IT IS THE LATTER.

Q. JUST PURELY SECURITY?

A. I WOULD THINK SO, YES.

Q. HAVE YOU ANY SPECIFIC COMMENT ON THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SYRIANS AND THE PALESTINIANS?

A. NO.

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THE ASSASSINATION

OF AMBASSADOR MELOY. WAS THERE ANY CONTACT, ANY COMMUNICATION, ON SECURITY FOR OFFICERS OF THE EMBASSY IN THEIR TRAVELS, INCLUDING THE AMBASSADOR, AT THE TIME OF THE ASSASSINATION? THAT WAS THE MIDDLE OF JUNE, RATHER THAN THE END OF JUNE.

A. NO. AS WE SAID, OUR DIRECT CONTACTS BEGAN AT THE END
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OF JUNE.

Q. BUT WERE THERE INDIRECT CONTACT ON THE SECURITY OF EMBASSY OFFICIALS IN THE MIDDLE OF JUNE?

A. I WOULD HAVE TO CHECK INTO THAT.

Q. WELL, THE POINT IS, WERE THERE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO THE AMBASSADOR TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE PRESIDENT OF LEBANON WHICH WOULD HAVE TAKEN THE AMBASSADOR THROUGH HOSTILE TERRITORY, AT LEAST INSECURE TERRITORY, WITHOUT FIRST HAVING ASCERTAINED THE SECURITY OF CHECKPOINTS FOR THE AMBASSADOR?

A. THE REASON THE AMBASSADOR WAS IN LEBANON WAS TO HAVE CONTACTS WITH THE PRINCIPAL LEBANESE LEADERS IN ORDER TO TRY TO BRING ABOUT A CEASE-FIRE AND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THAT PROBLEM. AND OBVIOUSLY, HE HAD THE DECISION TO MAKE WHEN HE WOULD MOVE AND WHEN HE WOULDN'T MOVE. AND HE ALSO HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY TO -- AND WE HAD SECURITY PEOPLE THERE -- TO INSURE HIS OWN SECURITY AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE PEOPLE WORKING FOR HIM.

MR. DAY, I THINK, TESTIFIED ON THIS SUBJECT AT SOME LENGTH YESTERDAY, JOE, ON THE HILL.

Q. WHAT I AM TRYING TO GET AT IS THAT WHETHER OR NOT INSTRUCTION HAD GONE FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO THE AMBASSADOR TO SEE MR. SARKIS AT A TIME WHEN SECURITY HAD

NOT BEEN ARRANGED FOR OFFICERS OF THE EMBASSY.

A. THE FACT IS THAT THERE WAS SECURITY. I MEAN TO SAY WE DID HAVE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS. AS MR. DAY MENTIONED YESTERDAY, WE HAVE ONE OF OUR MOST EXPERIENCED SECURITY OFFICERS STATIONED IN BEIRUT, AND THERE WERE PROVISIONS MADE, AND THIS SAME ROUTE HAD BEEN FOLLOWED BY MR. WARING. NO AMBASSADOR IS ORDERED TO DO SOMETHING WITHOUT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE LOCAL CONDITIONS AT ANY GIVEN TIME.

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Q. I THINK THAT IS JOE'S POINT. DIDN'T YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE PLO TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS IN THAT AREA, WHICH WOULD TAKE IT BACK EARLIER THAN LATE JUNE?

I THINK THAT IS WHAT HE IS TRYING TO SAY.

A. BUT ANY CONTACTS AT THAT TIME WOULD HAVE BEEN INDIRECT CONTACTS AND NOT DIRECT CONTACTS.

Q. BOB, WOULD A CONTACT BETWEEN SOMEONE LIKE MR. MAGROBI, OR THE OTHER LEBANESE SECURITY OFFICERS YOU HAD IN THE CHASE CAR, WITH THE PLO -- WOULD THAT HAVE BEEN A DIRECT CONTACT OR AN INDIRECT CONTACT?

A. I JUST DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER.

Q. WILL YOU TRY TO FIND OUT, PLEASE?

A. I WILL TRY TO FIND OUT, YES.

Q. DID YOU GET THE ANSWERS, BOB, TO THE QUESTIONS THAT WERE ASKED YESTERDAY ABOUT WHY DON'T WE CONSULT WITH THE PLO OR CONTACT THE PLO ON THE KILLERS OF AMBASSADOR MELOY, MR. WARING, AND THEIR DRIVER?

A. I WOULD WANT TO CHECK THE COMPLETE TESTIMONY OF MR. DAY ON THAT SUBJECT. I THINK THE WHOLE SUBJECT OF THE MURDER OF AMBASSADOR MELOY AND MR. WARING WAS DISCUSSED ON THE HILL YESTERDAY, AND I DO NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO ADD TO THAT.

Q. BOB, IS IT THE LEBANESE ARAB ARMY ONLY THAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SECURITY AROUND THE EMBASSY?

A. MY INFORMATION IS THAT IN MID-MARCH UNITS OF THE LEBANESE ARAB ARMY REPLACED LOCAL MILITIA IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF THE CHANCELLERY AND SINCE THAT TIME HAVE EXERCISED SECURITY IN THAT AREA.

Q. WHO DOES THE LEBANESE ARAB ARMY REPORT TO, DO YOU KNOW?

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A. I DO NOT KNOW.

Q. HAS ANYTHING IN WRITING GONE TO THE PLO IN ANY WAY FROM ANY OFFICIAL OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT?

A. I BELIEVE THAT IN ALL OF THIS -- THESE CONTACTS -- HAVE BEEN ORAL CONVERSATIONS BY THE EMBASSY SECURITY

OFFICER.

Q. WELL, YOU BELIEVE. I DON'T DOUBT THAT YOU'RE TELLING US THAT'S WHAT YOU BELIEVE. BUT DO WE KNOW, DO YOU KNOW?

A. OKAY, LET ME CHECK INTO IT.

Q. NOW, IN THESE CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOUS THAT HAVE GONE FROM THE PRESIDENT TO ALL PARTIES, INCLUDING THE PLO, ACCORDING TO THE PRESIDENTIAL NEWS SECRETARY, WAS THAT IN WRITING?

A. I HAVE TO CHECK WITH MR. NESSEN ON THAT. I DO NOT KNOW. IT WAS FROM THE WHITE HOUSE.

Q. AND IF IT IS IN WRITING, AND WHO WERE THEY DIRECTED TO? AND WHETHER THERE WAS ANY RESPONSE FROM THE PLO, AND TO WHOM THEY WENT.

A. LET ME CHECK WITH MR. NESSEN WHETHER THE WHITE HOUSE HAS RECEIVED ANY RESPONSE. I DO NOT THINK ANY --

Q. WELL, IT WOULD COME THROUGH STATE DEPARTMENT CHANNELS. I MEAN PRESUMABLY, UNLESS THE PLO HAS A SECRET OFFICE IN WASHINGTON.

A. NO, IT DOES NOT. YOU KNOW THAT.

Q. HAS IT BEEN DECIDED IF MR. SEELYE WILL RETURN TO BEIRUT?

A. NO, IT HAS NOT, I THINK HE IS DUE IN TOMORROW.

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Q. HAS THERE BEEN ANY COMMITMENT MADE, ANY PROMISE, ANY PLEDGE, ANY ASSURANCE, ANY HALF PROMISE, ANY INDICATION BY THE UNITED STATES TO THE PLO AS A RESULT OF THE PLO'S SO-CALLED COOPERATION IN THE EVACUATION, OR THE SECURITY?

A. NO. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER YOU HAVE READ WHAT WE

POSTED, JOE.

Q. I HAVEN'T.

A. WELL, I WOULD SUGGEST YOU LOOK AT IT. THAT IS THE EXTENT OF OUR CONTACT WITH THE PLO.

Q. THAT IS TO SAY THAT WE CONTACTED THE PLO TO INSURE THAT THEY WON'T FIRE OR MOLEST AMERICANS AND OTHERS BEING EVACUATED, AND WE DID NOT MAKE ANY SORT OF

RECIPROCITY IN ANY FORM TO THEM FOR THAT?

A. THAT IS CORRECT.

Q. I HOPE I HAVE CLOSED ALL THE LOOPHOLES.

A. THAT IS CORRECT.

Q. DO OFFICIAL AMERICAN TRAVELING IN BEIRUT TRAVEL WITH
A PLO ESCORT AT ANY TIME, DO YOU KNOW?

A. TO MY KNOWLEDGE, THE ONLY ESCORT WE HAVE ARE PEOPLE
WHO WORK FOR THE EMBASSY. I HAVE NEVER HEARD THAT REPORT.

Q. NO PLO MEMBERS WORK FOR THE EMBASSY, I TAKE IT.

A. NO.

Q. I JUST WANTED TO POINT OUT THAT -- JUST TO TIE UP THE
NOTE ON THIS ISSUE OF WHETHER YOU'VE TALKED ABOUT IT BEFORE
OR NOT -- ON JULY 12 YOU DID SAY -- QUOTE -- "WE ARE NOT
TALKING WITH THE PLO, NO" -- UNQUOTE.

A. WOULD YOU LIKE TO READ THE QUESTION BEFORE?
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Q. THAT WAS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE GROUPS THAT MIGHT
JOIN A ROUND-TABLE PEACE CONFERENCE.

A. MARVIN, YOU AND I WENT OVER THAT TRANSCRIPT, AND THAT
IS WHAT YOU TOLD ME BEFORE --

Q. I AM CONCERNED ABOUT GETTING IT ON THE RECORD.

A. -- AND IT WASN'T IN THAT CONTEXT. IT WAS A THREE-PAGE
Q AND A, AND THE QUESTIONS, AS YOU AND I SAW THIS MORNING,
WERE THAT WE WERE TAKING IN THE PRESENT TENSE -- AND ABOUT
WHETHER WE WERE INCLUDING THE PLO AS THE PARTIES IN LEBANON
WITH WHOM WE WERE TALKING. AND THE ANSWER IS NO.

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Q. I AM MERELY STATING -- IF YOU WOULD HAVE GIVEN ME A
CHANCE, I WOULD HAVE STATED -- THAT IS CERTAINLY A PROPER
INTERPRETATION OF YOUR COMMENT. IT IS ALSO, HOWEVER, ON
THE FACE OF IT ENTIRELY CONSISTENT WITH A MISLEADING
ABSENCE OF INFORMATION FROM YOU THAT THERE HAD BEEN, IN
FACT, CONTACT DIRECT WITH THE PLO AS THIS STATEMENT WAS
BEING MADE. SO IT IS MISLEADING ON ITS FACE IN THAT
SENSE.

"WE ARE NOT TALKING WITH THE PLO, NO," CARRIES WITH
IT A LARGE, FLAT ASSERTION OF NO TALKING. NOW, WE KNOW

NOW THAT THERE WAS SOME TALKING.

IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, YOU SAID THERE WAS NO RECIPROCITY. NOW, I ACCEPT YOUR PERSONAL WORD ON THIS. BUT THERE MAY BE SOME SLIPPAGE. SOMETHING HAS GONE BY ON THE SAME BASIS THAT YOU DID NOT TELL US, OR NOBODY FROM THAT PODIUM TOLD US, ABOUT THE CONTACT WITH THE PLO AS OF LATE JUNE. THEREFORE, THERE MIGHT BE A POSSIBILITY THAT THERE IS RECIPROCITY IN THE WORKS. AND IF SO, WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW.

A. IF I AM WRONG, I WILL GET BACK TO YOU.

Q. WE'VE TALKED IN THE PAST TENSE AND THE PRESENT TENSE
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ABOUT CONTACTS WITH THE PLO. CAN YOU ASSURE US THAT THERE WILL BE NO FUTURE CONTACTS WITH THE PLO BEYOND THE SECURITY ISSUE AS LONG AS THE CIRCUMSTANCES REMAIN THE SAME ABOUT THE VARIOUS UN RESOLUTIONS AND THAT SORT OF THING?

A. OUR POSITION ON THE PLO AND THE QUESTION OF THEIR NOT RECOGNIZING THE EXISTENCE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL, ALL OF THAT STANDS.

OUR CONTACTS WITH THE PLO ARE AS WE HAVE DESCRIBED THEM AND POSTED THEM.

Q. WOULD THEY BE LIMITED TO THE SECURITY ISSUES OF WEST BEIRUT?

A. YES, THAT IS MY UNDERSTANDING?

Q. THANK YOU, BOB. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

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